O3t2ShvC kjc 1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK -----x 2 3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, New York, N.Y. 4 23 Cr. 307 (LJL) v. 5 MICHAEL SHVARTSMAN, et al., 6 Defendants. 7 ----x Conference 8 March 29, 2024 10:10 a.m. 9 10 Before: 11 HON. LEWIS J. LIMAN, 12 District Judge 13 14 **APPEARANCES** DAMIAN WILLIAMS 15 United States Attorney for the 16 Southern District of New York BY: ELIZABETH A. HANFT 17 MATTHEW R. SHAHABIAN Assistant United States Attorneys 18 TAI PARK, PLLC 19 Attorneys for Defendant M. Shvartsman 20 BY: TAI HYUN PARK 21 SERCARZ & RIOPELLE, LLP 22 Attorney for Defendant G. Shvartsman BY: ROLAND G. RIOPELLE 23 24 SHAPIRO ARATO BACH, LLP Attorney for Defendant Garelick 25 BY: ALEXANDRA A. E. SHAPIRO JONATHAN BACH

(Case called)

THE DEPUTY CLERK: Starting with counsel for the government, please state your appearance for the record.

MS. HANFT: Good morning, your Honor. Elizabeth Hanft and Matthew Shahabian for the government.

THE COURT: Good morning.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Good morning, your Honor.

MS. SHAPIRO: Good morning, your Honor. Alexandra Shapiro and Jonathan Bach for defendant Bruce Garelick, and our client waives his appearance here.

MR. RIOPELLE: Good morning, your Honor. Roland Riopelle for defendant Gerald Shvartsman.

THE COURT: Okay. And I take it your client also waives his appearance?

MR. RIOPELLE: Yes, your Honor. I thought that was pretty clear.

MR. PARK: Good morning, your Honor. Tai Park for Michael Shvartsman, who also waives his appearance.

THE COURT: Okay.

All right. The conference is intended primarily for scheduling purposes but, Mr. Park, you sent me a letter dated March 24 in which you complained about the volume of some recent discovery from the government, that the government intends to produce further discovery, and that you've got a privilege issue.

Let me hear your concerns, and we will see if there is a way to address them.

MR. PARK: Your Honor, I wrote that letter in hopes that it would further support the motion for a transfer of venue on the money laundering counts because I'm not exactly sure how it can be resolved without more passage of time and trying to work this out, and obviously your Honor has since denied the motion for transfer.

I don't know yet, Judge, when the government is going to finish its production with respect to bank records and other records that they have told us is forthcoming. Those all relate to the money laundering counts. We are still going through the privilege log that was included or that the government subsequently produced to us that the bank — that the SNB Bank is the bank through which the government contends some part of the DWAC trading proceeds moved and it's a critical part of their money laundering charge.

The bank produced a fairly extensive privilege log.

We are still kind of slogging through those. As I indicated in my letter, one of the apparent and kind of immediate problems that jumped out at me is that there are some entries, many entries in it that don't describe who the communication was between, what the basis for that — the privilege assertion is. Those are all documents that apparently were completely withheld, not simply redacted. So I'm not sure that we can

resolve that during today's conference because we haven't, frankly, gotten our arms completely yet around the objections and concerns that we would have. Ordinarily we would want to go back to the government, try to work these out, talk to the bank's counsel, and try to — and try to winnow down the issues that cannot be resolved, so that it is ripe for judicial action. The problem is one of timing, that we still haven't gotten our arms around the production that has been sent to us in recent days and we are still waiting on more without an understanding of when those are actually going to be completed. So that's where we are, Judge.

THE COURT: What I would like to do, if it's possible, is try to set up a schedule so that if there is an issue with respect to privilege, you are in a position to tee it up quickly so I can make a decision quickly so that you've got — if there are documents that are improperly withheld or that you've got a right to them, we can make sure that you get them.

Let me hear from Ms. Hanft or --

MR. SHAHABIAN: With the Court's indulgence, I will handle this one, your Honor.

To start, I recognize the government did not put a letter in in response to Mr. Park's letter, given the Court's denial of the severance motion. The production that Mr. Park is referring to, as he notes, is primarily from SNB Bank, which is one of the banks involved in the money laundering count.

The production is not predominantly about the charged conduct in this case. The government's grand jury investigation is ongoing. It sweeps more broadly than just this case and these defendants. And in furtherance of that investigation, the government recently obtained the production to which Mr. Park refers.

Given the upcoming trial date, the government is also getting its arms around what SNB has produced, and we wanted to make sure the defense had the same access to the same documents the government did without conceding that those materials are necessarily Rule 16 in this case. Just given the time constraints, we wanted to make sure that the defense had access to all of the documents as we did.

But my understanding from my conversations with SNB's counsel is that the majority of those documents relate not to the charged money laundering conduct in this case. And so we are happy to work with Mr. Park and, as we get a better understanding of what was produced, we can narrow the scope of what was actually relevant to this case.

But as the government received it, we have produced it to make it available to the defense. But the majority of it is just not actually part of this case.

THE COURT: The figure of 240,000 pages is essentially meaningless because -- particularly when it applies to bank documents without knowing what the subpoena asked for, what the

documents are. At least my experience with bank documents is that they usually pertain to certain accounts and you should be able to indicate which accounts might be relevant and which accounts wouldn't be relevant or that you wouldn't use in this case.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor.

Honor is right, a lot of the volume is bank records. As the Court knows from the briefing on the money laundering charges, the account at SNB was a high-volume business account that did many transactions in short periods of time. Many of the documents are those transaction documents, individual transactions running through that account, most of which are just the normal business of that account, not the actual money laundering conduct.

In addition to account specific documents, the government has also produced e-mails, including e-mails solely within SNB, not e-mails involving any of the defendants. It involves e-mails with people who are not charged defendants in this case. It involves corporate policies and corporate records internal to SNB, how they handle things like, know your customer regulations, anti-money laundering regulations, things that relate to the bank's handling of this account and related accounts and aren't particular to the defendants' conduct so much as how the bank handled certain representations or

documents.

THE COURT: Are you in a position to be able to tell Mr. Park which of those documents you believe to be relevant to the case and to make some commitments as to what you intend to offer at trial? So at least to make his life a little bit easier in looking through the documents, it may be that there are documents that you don't intend to use that will be relevant to him, but at least you can provide him some guidance.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor.

We are not in a position to do that today as we are also trying to get our arms around the productions that we also just recently received, but we do understand the Court's concern and should be able to make those kinds of representations to Mr. Park shortly.

THE COURT: Mr. Park also made reference to ongoing productions, and maybe you foreshadowed that a little bit by indicating that this is an ongoing grand jury investigation. Are there documents right now that you have subpoenaed but you haven't received that you intend to use at trial; and, if so, when do you expect to produce them? I realize, by asking the question, you don't know what's going to be in the documents. But sometimes you request something for the purpose of the case.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor. And the government

has issued trial subpoenas that are returnable the first day of trial. So obviously parties can produce earlier, but that's when they are returnable. Nothing in terms of the volume of the SNB Bank production, more things like travel records, hotel records, things that, as we are obtaining, we are producing. It is not going to be anything like the volume of what we just received from SNB which, frankly, was surprising to the government when we received that many documents, as well.

THE COURT: Do you have thoughts about if Mr. Park intends to challenge the assertion of the privilege, how to tee that up quickly? For one, I gather, but I will ask him, Mr. Park has not served his own subpoena on SNB Bank. There may be a question about whether he's got standing to challenge their assertions of privilege, but I would hope that that is an issue that we can get beyond. Tell me what your thoughts are.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor. Before I turn to that, my colleague pointed out the SNB production is still ongoing. We understand we have the majority of the documents, but there may still be some additional productions we should obtain from SNB shortly. They are aware of our trial date, and we have pressed the urgency of getting anything additional they have from them.

THE COURT: Maybe you could also press on them not just the urgency of the trial date but that the judge has impressed on you the urgency of getting the documents as soon

as possible so that they can be produced to the defense and that the judge scheduled a conference precisely for that purpose.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor, we will do that.

And with respect to the privilege log issue, as the Court is aware from our last conference, this came up with respect to privilege logs from DWAC and other related entities. We worked with Mr. Park to try to sort of be the go-between between counsel for those entities and Mr. Park's concerns with the privilege log. We are happy to try to do the same here to avoid unnecessary subpoenas and standing issues.

THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Park, the reason why I scheduled this conference—and maybe I didn't need to have all of you in—was because I got a letter from you saying I have 160,000 -- sorry 240,000 pages of documents to go through, and I wanted to see whether there were things that I could do to push the case along and avoid problems down the road. Are there any other suggestions or requests that you would make?

MR. PARK: First of all, I appreciate very much your Honor's efforts to intercede in an effort to ameliorate any difficulty that the defense is going to face given the time frame.

But I did want to, besides us continuing to work with the government, I think it would be helpful to set a schedule with respect to the privilege issues. And I want to point out

something—I understand Mr. Shahabian's representation to the Court and I respect it—that the bulk of these documents and perhaps the privileged materials don't really relate to the money laundering charges.

But as my letter reflects, your Honor, in addition to the money laundering charges, the government recently provided notice of other bad acts under Rule 404(b), and at least one of them pertains to alleged misrepresentations to the bank that my client was allegedly involved in with respect to the nature of the business that would be of the fund that would be flowing through that bank account.

THE COURT: That's the cannabis related business?

MR. PARK: Correct, your Honor. And our position is that the bank absolutely had full knowledge and awareness of the nature of the funds that it paid for processing that would be going toward payments of cannabis merchants.

Now, while it may be strictly accurate --

THE COURT: Refresh me. Is the sale of cannabis specified unlawful activity? I know it is not the one that's charged in the indictment.

MR. PARK: No, it's not, your Honor. Oh, is it a separate specified unlawful activity? I don't know the answer to that, your Honor. Certainly I don't know the answer to that as it pertains to legitimate businesses that are lawfully conducted within various states.

But coming back to Mr. Shahabian's representation, I think we need to take a broader look at what the government intends to do at trial, and they have already signaled that they intend to bring forward in the trial allegations that misrepresentations by — either explicitly or by omission were made to a bank.

As I look at -- just, again, just even a glancing review of the privilege log suggests that there were kind of intensive discussions with counsel regarding this account that was opened. At one point they received a grand jury subpoena, from I believe in April of 2023, again, kind of frequent attorney-client communications, the nature of which of course we are not aware, and the bank continued to process the payments.

And so, again, kind of if the government says we are not -- these are not related to the money launder charge and they also represent we are not going to produce -- you know, kind of introduce other acts that are not related to the money laundering counts, that's fine, Judge, but they can't kind of have it both ways and say that they are not related at all.

So it is just, again -- and I'm not asking for reconsideration of the motion for transfer. What I am saying, though, Judge, is these kinds of very difficult issues of discovery, privilege, etc., sometimes take months to sort out just with parties that are working very hard. And the

government in this case decided to charge the money laundering counts on February 8, and the underlying insider trading charges are enormously complex and challenging in and of themselves. And so for me and my team and Mr. Shvartsman to be struggling to get ready for that insider trading charge while at the same time trying to just drink from a fire hose, really, with respect to this belatedly filed money laundering charge is just patently unfair, Judge.

And so that's why we asked for the transfer, because that would account — that would enable the government to pursue money laundering charges but giving us time to adequately prepare for that. And I think what this letter was trying to feature is these problems are not just abstract, they are very, very imminent, and they are very pragmatic as to how much —

THE COURT: That's the reason why we are -- I scheduled this conference, to come up with pragmatic ways of dealing with it. I'm not sure that I would subscribe -- and in fact I don't subscribe to the notion that the money laundering count was belated, but let's put that aside. You suggested that I set a schedule for motion practice with respect to the assertion of privilege by SNB Bank. We don't have them here, but I think we can schedule a tentative date or procedure to address any issues. What are your thoughts?

MR. PARK: I would like to confer with the government,

your Honor --

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. PARK: -- because I would like to see how much we can accomplish without --

THE COURT: So maybe what you will do is send me a letter by mid next week --

MR. PARK: Very good, your Honor.

THE COURT: -- with a suggestion along those lines.

MR. PARK: Very good, your Honor.

THE COURT: Let me ask the government, I'm not going to rule on any 404(b) issues right now, but how does cannabis play a role in this?

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor. Mr. Park is correct. We did notice under 404(b), and I didn't mean to be carving that out from what we think is relevant from the production, that the bank was misinformed as to the nature of the business that Mr. Shvartsman and his business partners were operating through that bank account, and we think that is relevant 404(b) evidence. It goes to intent with respect to the money laundering count. It goes to knowledge. And we will identify any documents in the production that we think are relevant to that.

That notice, though, wasn't based primarily or even, I think, at all on our review of the productions we just received. It is based on prior productions and conversations

with witnesses.

But to the extent that there are documents that are relevant to that notice, we will point those out for Mr. Park and the scope of what we think is relevant for this trial.

What I was trying to say is there is an investigation that is broader than Mr. Shvartsman and his conduct, and many of the documents relates to that, and that's what I am saying we don't think is Rule 16.

THE COURT: I understand that. You may need to convince me how the fact that the account was used for a cannabis business is 404(b) evidence with respect to the intent to use the account to conceal the proceeds of insider trading.

But, again, I'm not deciding on that now, just --

MR. SHAHABIAN: Understood.

THE COURT: -- a point of curiosity.

So maybe Wednesday of next week send me a letter about what you can do. The government has hopefully heard me and will be in touch with SNB Bank so they can put their foot to the pedal and get the documents over as quickly as possible and that you are to try to work with Mr. Park to identify -- help him work through the documents.

MR. SHAHABIAN: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Park.

MR. PARK: Your Honor, on a slightly different note, but not all that different, I have had communications with the

government regarding another item of discovery that I think is very important and, frankly, goes to one of the elements of the crime of insider trading. We have not been able to resolve this between us and the government. I have been trying to figure out whether my next step is to come to your Honor for relief or to try to do — serve some process on the entity itself.

But the issue is this. DWAC, the company at issue, whose information was allegedly misappropriated, has filed a lawsuit against Patrick Orlando, who was DWAC's former CEO during the relevant time period. And they have alleged that, prior to the public announcement of DWAC potentially merging with Trump Media Group, Mr. Orlando was overheard speaking to the press about the potential merger with TMG. This is a public filing that DWAC has filed, I believe, in state court in Florida against Mr. Orlando, and they make other accusations about him.

I asked the government, and I actually wrote a letter to the government essentially outlining the allegations in the DWAC, a lawsuit against Mr. Orlando. I had always presumed that Mr. Orlando would be a witness for the government in this case. But whether he is or not, I consider this flat-out Brady information. DWAC has avowed that it is cooperating with the government.

As your Honor knows, one of the last issues I raised

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in this connection was in connection with DWAC's failure to produce a privilege log. I spoke to the government about that. They talked to DWAC. Within days, DWAC produced a privilege log. The government, in my view, all they need to do is pick up the phone and say, What's the basis for your allegations in a verified complaint publicly against Orlando that he spoke to the press? Obviously one of the elements is that the information about potential TMG merger was not public. If he is talking to the press, it undermines that element. Brady. I think, Judge, that it would have been common sense for the prosecutor in charge of this case to just call him up and say, Where's this coming from? Send it over to me. Let me know. And then, pursuant to their Brady obligations, produce it to the defense. They have declined to do that, and I'm just not sure what the next step is for me, Judge, other than potentially to bring it to your attention.

I also thought about some kind of a Rule 17(c) subpoena on the company, and how would I phrase it, because I don't know whether they have witnesses, whether they have documents. It would be -- you know, they could potentially hold off until the first day of trial, which doesn't give me enough time to investigate.

I don't think I should be in this position, Judge, in all candor. I think the government should simply call up Wilmer Cutler, who represents DWAC and has represented DWAC for

years now, and just say what's the basis for your filing?

THE COURT: Ms. Hanft or Mr. Shahabian.

MS. HANFT: Yes, your Honor.

We have spoken to Mr. Park about this. In the government's view, this is information that's not in our possession and so we are not obligated to go out and look for it and then produce it to Mr. Park.

What we have told Mr. Park is to the extent that the government decides to obtain this information, of course we hear him loud and clear as to how he views this information, and we will produce anything that we think we must produce pursuant to our *Brady* obligations.

But for Mr. Park to simply desire that we make a phone call to a law firm because that law firm has previously produced certain items to the government and ask the basis for allegations in a complaint that are likely tied up in all kinds of privilege issues as well, we don't think is appropriate.

But the message that Mr. Park views anything going to whether or not a particular witness leaked information to the press as, you know, going to the element, one of the elements of insider trading, we hear it loud and clear and understand our obligations with respect to that.

THE COURT: So Mr. Park, it's not Brady if they don't have it. So isn't the answer for you to serve a Rule 17 subpoena? You might come to me. I think it is now, you know,

transparent in terms of what it is that you are asking for.

And I don't know whether it would satisfy the *Nixon* standards for you to get the stuff prior to trial or not. I don't know what the government's position would be with respect to that, but it seems to me that's the next step.

We have all been in a position of drafting subpoenas and trying to figure out the right way to get it. If it's information that's in a litigation, maybe there is actually some stuff that's been produced in the litigation between the parties. I don't know.

MR. PARK: We haven't been able to see anything like that, your Honor.

THE COURT: That doesn't surprise me. My guess is there is some form of a "confi" agreement in that case, right, or is there not?

MR. PARK: It was just filed, I think, toward the end of February, so I doubt there has been any exchange of discovery.

Judge, look, I mean, I will do that. I just -- I mean, I just find this surprising, I mean, that I have got an indicted case, they are about to go to trial, and one of the issues is whether it is nonpublic or not. You would think they would want to know the answer to this question.

THE COURT: I hear what you say. But, on the other hand, sitting where I am and without knowing all of the

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back-and-forth, I'm not going to get involved --1 2 MR. PARK: I understand. THE COURT: -- in the discovery dispute. 3 4 MR. PARK: I understand. 5 THE COURT: But if there is an issue with respect to 6 Rule 17, I've been trying in this case to turn to things 7 quickly because I understand the need for the defense to 8 prepare. 9 Thank you, your Honor. MR. PARK: THE COURT: Anything else from the government? 10 11 MS. HANFT: Nothing from the government. Thank you, 12 your Honor. 13 THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Shapiro, Mr. Bach, 14 Mr. Riopelle, I haven't had anything from you. I don't know if you've got anything for me, or I can let you go for the 15 weekend. 16 17 MR. BACH: We have nothing. 18 Mr. Garelick is really not addressed in the 404(b) 19 There appears to be almost nothing raised with respect notice. 20 to our client, Mr. Bruce Garelick. However, there is one

sentence where the government kind of says as to all three defendants and then says something that we consider very vague.

THE COURT: Maybe you can work that out with the government.

> We have been trying. And I am just noting MR. BACH:

it because we haven't gotten any clarification yet. If we can't work it out, we will raise it with the Court.

MS. HANFT: And just for the record, your Honor, counsel did raise it to us I believe it was a day or two ago, and so we will work to respond.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. SHAPIRO: It was more than that.

MR. BACH: It was more than that.

THE COURT: It may have been more than that. Whatever it is, you will work to respond before there is briefing on 404(b) that has to come before me.

Mr. Riopelle -- or Ms. Shapiro?

MS. SHAPIRO: I believe the deadline for motions in limine is actually next Thursday. So it's less than a week away and we don't know the answer to the question.

THE COURT: Ms. Hanft and Mr. Shahabian are going to get you an answer and, if not, then you will brief it.

Mr. Riopelle.

MR. RIOPELLE: My client and his partner are religious Jews, and they note that the trial is set to start the last two days of the Passover week. They had asked me to ask for a two-day adjournment of the trial so we could complete the Passover week before we begin the proceedings. So on their behalf, I make that request, your Honor. I think I had mentioned it to the government in a phone call recently.

THE COURT: I mean, I'm very disinclined to grant that request, so I'm not going to grant it. You can renew it on paper if there is really a strong basis for it.

MR. RIOPELLE: Thank you, your Honor.

MR. PARK: Your Honor, my client also made this request, and we were going to have Mr. Riopelle address it.

But this -- what this could mean, Judge, is that the jury pool from which the jury would be drawn is not reflective of what I think Mr. Shvartsman is entitled to. If there are a number of jurors who are in the pool who are not there because they are observant, I think that's unfair, Judge. And so I have to confess I was not aware of the April 29 date and how that interplays with Passover, but I believe this is a serious issue, Judge, and we are just asking for a couple of days.

THE COURT: Why don't you raise that when you file your motions in limine. You can then brief if you think that there is a fair cross-section argument. I'm not going to decide it on the fly.

MR. PARK: Very good, Judge. Thank you.

MR. BACH: One more thing, Judge. We have also -- and you might have the same answer you had for me before. We have not reached any agreement with the government on the date to disclose 3500 material. We have asked them to tell us the date that they propose, and they have not even told us the date that they would propose. Obviously there is a lot of time pressure

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here. We would like the 3500 material sooner than later. But at least we want to know what their position is on that subject.

THE COURT: Is the government prepared to provide a

THE COURT: Is the government prepared to provide a response right now?

MS. HANFT: Not right now, your Honor, but we are happy to provide a date to counsel within the next, I would say, week. We will give them -- we will commit to a date for 3500.

MR. BACH: That's essentially not --

THE COURT: Why don't you do it by Wednesday?

MS. HANFT: Okay, your Honor. Understood.

THE COURT: All right. How --

MS. HANFT: Your Honor, one other thing. Ms. Shapiro just said that motions in limine were due next Thursday. I want to confirm they are in fact due next Friday.

THE COURT: What I have is April 5.

MS. HANFT: That's Friday. Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. So Ms. Shapiro you don't have to send me anything on Thursday. It's April 5.

MS. SHAPIRO: Okay. Sorry. I made a mistake.

THE COURT: Have a good weekend, everybody. Thank you.

COUNSEL: Thank you, your Honor.

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